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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: CRISIS IN LEBANON

¶1. Summary: The Arabic-language media continues to support Hezbollah's struggle against Israel. In "Al-Khaleej" one editorial hailed the Lebanese peoples' remarkable endurance over the past seventeen days. Another in "Al-Bayan" criticized the United Nations for responding so weakly to the murder of four of its observers. Finally an article in "Al-Ittihad" criticized the Arab League for not adequately supporting Lebanon, and attributed this behavior to sectarian divisions, historical enmities and other divisions within the Arab and Muslim worlds. End Summary.

¶2. Under the headline "Between the land's owners and its occupiers", the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) published the following in a 07/29 editorial:

"What secret lies behind Lebanon's endurance over the past seventeen days, as it has faced the most brutal Zionist aggression imaginable, directed against its civilians, its cities and villages, its infrastructure, even relief convoys? All under the legitimating glow of a green light from American neo-conservatives and several other countries? It seems as if whoever owns his own land and has the willpower to resist will ultimately win out, no matter how oppressive and brutal their occupier might be."

¶3. Under the headline "No condolences for the United Nations", the Dubai-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Bayan" (circulation 85,000) published the following in a 07/29 editorial:

"... American actions are evident in this most recent statement from the United Nations, which feebly condemns the killings of four of its peacekeepers, expressing concern for the security of UN workers but not condemning Israel. It only serves to undermine the UN's international position, making it seem ever more like an American body as opposed to an international one. What a Chinese Ambassador once noted is now proving true: the UN is incapable of even supporting its peacekeepers with anything other than a strongly worded political message. If the United Nations is unable to protect its own workers underneath their blue caps, then it certainly cannot take a strong stand on issues of international legitimacy. How can any true condolences be sent to the United Nations when the Israeli Ambassador, whose country was responsible for the killings, stands besides them and sheds crocodile tears? It can barely keep its own dignity in the eyes of the world, let alone international peace and legitimacy."

14. On 07/29, UAE columnist Naser Al-Dhaheri wrote the following in an untitled edition of his weekly editorial in the Abu Dhabi-based Arabic-language daily "Al Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"Ethical advice from religious leaders that allows individuals to refrain from supporting the Lebanese people and Hezbollah in their ordeal comes from false counselors... The Arab League will never be united, because its members have too many interests with Jewish diamond dealers, and investments on Haifa's shores, and participate in Israeli-run investments in African wood. Furthermore, they hate the Phoenicians with whom the Arabs have warred so often in the past, and they have religious problems with Hassan Nasrallah, and hate Nabeeh Barri. And perhaps they can't clearly see the images on Al-Jazeera revealing the scale of the atrocities and destruction being inflicted on Lebanon, but instead tune into American television to update themselves on what is happening in the world."

QUINN